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AUTHOR Cornbleth, Catherine; And Others
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ALSTRACT

How the social organization of the classroom, including teacher and student roles, patterns of interaction, and norms extended or constrained students' learning opportunities was examined. A total of 6 English, science, and social studies classes in grades 6 and 7 were observed for the first month of the school year; activities in the school were monitored; and informal interviews were conducted with staff. Additional data were obtained through school documents and a previous observation interview study. Described in this report are: (1) how the teachers began the year--the differences in style and commonalities in the messages they communicated as they attempted to establish their preferred image and classroom atmosphere; (2) the teachers' means of establishing classroom rules and student teacher interaction patterns; and (3) the curricular and social meanings of the emerging ground rules and routines. All classrooms were clearly teacher dominated. Students seemed generally to accept teacher expectations. While the orderly social environment and effective classroom management did provide ample and equal opportunity for students to learn something, student initiative, although usually tolerated, was not encouraged. (RM)

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Creating the Curriculum: Beginning the Year
in a Middle School

Catherine Cornbleth, Willard Korth, and Ernest B. Dorow

School of Education

University of Pittsburgh

Studies of classroom curriculum processes typically view curriculum as a product produced outside the classroom and implemented inside classrooms by teachers with varying degrees of enthusiasm and competence. An alternative conception of curriculum, which has guided this inquiry, is that curriculum is jointly, albeit not necessarily equally, negotiated by teachers and students as they interact over time in particular classroom settings (see Waller, 1932; Woods, 1978, 1980). The curriculum is the socially constructed curriculum-in-use.

Curriculum-in-use encompasses both subject matter and social organization, the latter including teacher and student roles (and attendant rights and obligations) and patterns of

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interaction. Social organization provides a setting for academic activities that can extend or constrain students' learning opportunities. Recitation activities, for example, reflect the super- and subordinate roles of teachers and students, respectively, and the limited interaction patterns found in many classrooms. Learning opportunities are constrained by the recitation format insofar as students are discouraged from raising questions or offering comments.

Not only does social organization have academic effects and academic activity have social consequences, but the ongoing construction of the curriculum-in-use communicates normative messages including meanings of authority, responsibility, work, and success. Curriculum construction is a complex process involving the interplay of biographical, material, professional, institutional, sociocultural, and historical elements. The construction of classroom curriculum both reflects and responds to the larger social context of school environment, community milieu, and prevailing ideologies (see Popkewitz, 1981; Popkewitz, Tabachnick, & Wehlage, 1982).

Creating the Curriculum-in-Use

Typically, classroom curriculum research is initiated during the school year. While such research provides access to curriculum-in-progress, it does not reveal what occurred previously that likely influenced and might explain what is subsequently observed. Consistent with our conception of curriculum-in-use, we assume that how students, teachers, and other school personnel begin the school year establishes a framework for what follows, including what students have an opportunity to learn and how they are enabled to learn it. While there are continuities from year to year -- in facilities, policies and procedures, course requirements, staff and students, and community expectations -- and what has been described as a "recurring rhythm" (Smith & Geoffrey, 1968, p. 21), schools do not simply reopen in early autumn and carry on from the previous spring. In a sense, schools are recreated at the beginning of each school year. While the means by which classroom management or teacher control is established at the beginning of the school year have been studied (e.g., Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Sarason, 1971, Ch. 11), there has been little attention to the creation of classroom curriculum (see Ball, 1980).

The study reported here builds on an earlier field study conducted with English, science, and social studies teachers in a suburban middle school (Cornbleth & Korth, 1982; Korth & Cornbleth, 1982). Despite the staff's apparent coherence and seriousness of purpose, many of the academic tasks presented to students seemed trivial to us. For example, while 90 percent of class time was spent in academic activities, only 21 percent was devoted to comprehension or reasoning tasks (Korth & Cornbleth, 1982). Interested in how their curriculum came into being, we returned the following year to investigate how teachers and students created the curriculum-in-use in their classrooms at the beginning of the school year. Specific questions guiding our inquiry were:

1. How were classroom academic and social rules and patterns of interaction established?
2. What seemed to be the purposes and effects of the emerging academic and social organizational groundrules and routines?
3. What meanings were given to authority, responsibility, work, and success?

The Teachers and Their School

The teachers were volunteers who had participated in the previous year's study of teacher perspectives (Cornbleth & Korth, 1982) and classroom activities, tasks, and cognitive instruction (Korth & Cornbleth, 1982). Nine of the 12 teachers from the previous year's study remained

at the school. Six were selected on the basis of subject area, grade level, and class schedule so as to include one seventh and one eighth grade class for each of the three subject areas (English, science, and social studies).

With one exception (seventh grade English), the teachers were males. All but one (eighth grade English) had more than 10 years of teaching experience. They impressed us as career teachers, that is, teachers who believe their work is important, enjoy most of it most of the time, and intend to remain in teaching.

The school administrators (principal and assistant principal) were cooperative, congenial, and unobtrusive. Overall, there seemed to be a positive rapport among the principals, teachers, and support staff, based on mutual respect and evidenced by informal conversations, friendly joking, and the absence of hostile comments.

The study site was a seventh-eighth grade suburban middle school. The school serves all the students in the district, which includes three communities adjacent to a large northeastern United States industrial city. The 530 students (down 20 students from the previous year) represent a range of socioeconomic backgrounds; although some students qualify for free lunches, the large majority are middle class, and almost all are white. Students' standardized test scores are at or above national norms, and there are no major student behavior or faculty morale problems at the school.

While old, the school building is well maintained, and hallways are colorfully decorated with student murals. The residential neighborhood immediately surrounding the school is also old and unpretentious but well maintained. On two sides are tree-lined streets with small, mostly one-family, brick homes and neatly kept front yards. On the other two sides are a small park and ballfield.

School-Classroom Observation

Data were obtained by means of (a) daily observation of the six classes during the first week of the 1981-82 school year and one observation per week for each of the next three weeks, (b) monitoring activities in the school office, and (c) informal interviews with staff members. These data were supplemented with information obtained from school documents (e.g., student handbook, daily absence sheet and announcements) and the previous year's extended observation-interview study.

A graduate student monitored the school office and kept a narrative, sequential log of activities from the time students entered the building through homeroom and first period during the first week of school.¹ Each of the three authors observed the first or the second period class of two teachers throughout the study.

During each classroom observation, the observer recorded (a) the nature and duration of academic, procedural, management, and "other" activities, (b) the type of academic tasks students were expected to

accomplish during each academic activity, and (c) particular events and dialogue relevant to the research questions.² Previously established interobserver agreement for the coding of activities, tasks, and time duration exceeded 80 percent across observers and coding categories.

All classroom observations included an entire class period of approximately 40 minutes, depending on the school's schedule for the day. Each class was observed seven times (four days the first week and once a week for the next three weeks) for a total of 42 classroom observations (14 in each subject area, 21 at each grade level).

Beginning the Year in a Middle School

A dominant impression the first day of school was orderliness and calm. When the first busloads of students arrived, Dave,³ the seventh grade social studies teacher, was on bus duty as last year, coffee cup in hand, welcoming and directing students. Inside the school, it seemed like any other day except that there were fewer teachers in the workroom drinking coffee or running off dittoes; most were in the halls, greeting familiar students and asking new ones if they needed help finding their homeroom. Separate orientation assemblies for seventh and eighth grade students were held in the gym during an extended homeroom period. At these assemblies, students were welcomed back to school, informed of key school rules, and urged to assume responsibility by cooperating (following the rules), paying attention and participating in class, and making

an effort to do well. Then, classes proceeded on a modified schedule with relatively few interruptions from the office or from lost or late students.

The principals and office staff appeared to be models of organization and friendly efficiency. In the office, two secretaries, assisted by the school nurse and two counselors, handled various tasks such as answering the phone, collecting attendance envelopes, filling out early dismissal slips and distributing bus passes. The principals made announcements over the public address system, assisted as needed at the office counter, and conducted the assemblies. Administrators, faculty, and staff appeared to work well together, encouraging and supporting one another.

The teachers' major goal during the first days of school seemed to be to create a personal image and classroom atmosphere -- as if setting the stage for a play that they would be starring in and directing. The means they employed and the images they created varied considerably. During homeroom announcements on the first day, Harry cautioned his eighth graders that "This year's teachers may not be like last year's. You're wise to figure out what each teacher will tolerate and what flips them out." Illustrative of the differences among teachers are the following teacher comments to their students on the first day of school:

This is my room. I am the king, and you are the subjects.

(eighth grade science teacher)

If you don't aggravate me, I won't
aggravate you. . . . As long as you do what I tell you,
we'll get along fine. (seventh grade social studies teacher)
You are very important to me. If you are worried, see me.
I want you to be successful this year. (seventh grade English
teacher)

Despite striking differences in style, there were significant
commonalities in the messages communicated by the six teachers as they
attempted to establish their preferred image and classroom atmosphere.
Two messages predominated : (a) teachers should be obeyed,
and students would benefit from accepting and meeting teacher stan-
dards ; and (b) students should not worry about
subject matter learning and grades, at least not at this time.

The teachers assumed control of their classes in different ways,
ranging from exaggerated self-presentation to efforts to develop a sense
of community among students. For example, Mike, the eighth grade science
teacher, regularly made outrageous statements such as this threat prior
to a quiz on the third day of school: "Cheating is taken care of by
cruel and unusual punishment, outlawed by the Supreme Court but practiced
here." Mike clearly communicated that he expects to be taken seriously
if not literally and that he has a sense of humor but would not tolerate
students' taking advantage of him. All six teachers appeared to us as

acting in what they saw as their students' best interests. They presented themselves as knowledgeable helpers and expected their students to trust them.

Only the English teachers used subject matter in establishing their personal image and classroom atmosphere. Harry, the eighth grade English teacher, involved students in a rapidly paced series of activities from the beginning, thus establishing himself as a no-nonsense teacher who does not waste time. Ruth, the seventh grade English teacher, began with a spelling list of teachers' names and school-related words (e.g., counselor, mathematics) to help students get to know and feel comfortable in the school. On the second day, she encouraged students to respond to and express their feelings about the nature posters on the bulletin board as an introduction to poetry writing.

While the teachers were assertive in creating a classroom social organization, they seemed to be easing students into academic activities. For the most part, academic demands were minimal, consisting of reviews or introductions such as a discussion of "What is science?" and "What do scientists do?" in the seventh grade science class. The implication was that if students make an effort, they will get passing grades; school is to be taken seriously, but not everyone is expected to do well academically. Only Harry placed any emphasis on academic learning, telling his eighth grade English class on the first day of school that "Basically, we're going to learn in here -- writing, reading, and grammar." He

emphasized that this might be the students' "last chance" to learn basic skills such as spelling and writing and that basic writing and reading skills are important for any job.

The proportion of class time spent with academic activities and with comprehension and reasoning tasks (in contrast to information acquisition or reproduction tasks) is presented for each class in Table 1 and by subject area and grade level in Table 2. Overall, the proportion of class time spent with academic activities was high, exceeding two-thirds by day two and leveling off at approximately 90 percent after the first week. The proportion of class time spent with comprehension and reasoning tasks also increased after the first week, averaging approximately 40 percent.⁴

There was little difference between seventh and eighth grade classes in the time spent with academic activities. It might be expected that less time would be needed to orient eighth than seventh graders, who were new to the school, and that eighth grade classes would spend more time with academic activities during the first week. However, consistent with the recreating the curriculum hypothesis, teachers apparently did not assume that eighth graders are already sufficiently socialized to warrant movement directly to academic activity.

Establishing Classroom Rules and Interaction Patterns

Efforts to create classroom social organizational groundrules, usually in the form of behavioral or procedural regulations, were quite explicit during the first weeks of school as were the rules themselves. In contrast, academic expectations remained much less clear.

The social rules were not simply established by teacher announcement but were negotiated by teachers and students over time. Our meaning of negotiation derives from Strauss (1978) who describes negotiation as a process of bargaining or working things out, a "means of 'getting things accomplished' when parties need to deal with each other to get those things done" (p. 234). Negotiation might involve reaching agreements, making trade-offs, compromising, and covert deals (e.g., a teacher ignoring a rule violation by a usually cooperative student when the violation is not disruptive of the class as a whole). Classroom interaction generally can be viewed as ongoing negotiation wherein teachers and students attempt to reach "working agreements" regarding "who they are and what is going on between them, agreements which they formulate, act upon, and use together to make sense of each other . . . and to hold each other accountable for any breach of the formulated consensus" (McDermott, 1977, p. 199). These working arrangements may be informal or tacit and

contrary to official policy (e.g., a teacher allowing gum chewing in class as long as the gum remains unseen and unheard). When negotiations break down, teachers and students might resort to alternative modes of action such as appeals to authority, threats, bribes, or physical coercion. Negotiation, then, can be seen as a means of accommodation, accommodation of individuals to one another, their situation, and the task at hand. Conceivably, negotiation might lead to redefinition of the situation and tasks to be accomplished, although this is not typical in school situations.

Negotiation of classroom social rules was usually initiated by the teacher early in the first class period. Students seemed to anticipate and accept that this would be the case. For example, students in the seventh grade social studies class talked among themselves as they entered the room. When the bell rang and Dave entered, they were seated and silent, looking up at him expectantly. After six or more years of school experience, students seemed to know what is expected of them.

The social organizational groundrules presented by teachers during the first week of school are summarized in Figure 1. Ranging from three to six in number, none was common to all teachers. The most frequently appearing rule was that students were to bring a notebook and pencil to class everyday. Being ready to work when the bell rings -- not wasting time -- was a priority for most of the teachers. Also evident in a majority of the teachers' rule announcements were notions of reciprocity

with respect to treating each other decently. Harry, for example, told his eighth grade English students, "I expect a degree of courtesy from you, and you can expect a degree of courtesy from me." Courtesy, he explained, means not interrupting one another (raise your hand if you want to speak) and not being hostile, verbally or physically. He also told his class, "I'm not a morning person, and I have allergies," indicating that he might not look or feel too well some days and would appreciate their consideration -- and would do the same for them.

For the most part, rules were presented matter-of-factly by the teachers, sometimes written on the chalkboard, and usually explained or justified. Being on time and having your materials so class can start when the bell rings means that time is not wasted getting ready to work. Gary, the eighth grade social studies teacher, told his students, "It is your job. Bring the tools of your trade to class. What would you think of a plumber who arrived without tools?" Harry explained that notebooks and note-taking were important because some books could not be taken home (only one class set was provided) and because taking notes helps you pay attention and remember.

Several teachers also indicated the consequences of noncompliance with classroom rules (e.g., detention for being late to class). Gary warned his students that he would "blow up" if they interrupted a speaker or disrupted a presentation. Emphasizing that students were not to go behind his desk where he kept a variety of science lab supplies, Wally,

the seventh grade science teacher, told students that anyone who did would end up with "a long, skinny neck with [my] fingerprints on it." Such exaggerated threats and humor seemed to have a double message -- "I mean what I say," but "I'm not a bad guy." The teachers also used humor to make commands more palatable and deter possible hostile student reactions. Asking students to speak up so that he could hear them, Gary commented, "People [like me] who lose their hair are old and hard of hearing." Prior to calling roll for the first time, Dave told his students, "I have no idea who you are. When I call your name, wave your hand . . . If I mispronounce it, do something."

In addition to presenting and explaining rules, and sometimes indicating the consequences of noncompliance, the teachers reviewed rules with students, and, in some classes, the rules appeared on quizzes. Mike, for example, presented three of his five rules on the first day of school. On the second day, he reviewed them, added two more, and announced a quiz for the next day that would include the five rules. On the quiz, students were told, "As briefly as possible, state the five basic rules of survival in this class." Teacher rule reminders to individual students and the class as a whole were not uncommon, and, on occasion, students reminded each other of the rules. For example, prior to the start of Mike's class during the second week, one student cautioned two others who were looking at the hamsters and fish, "don't touch."

Two of the teachers seemed to set students up for misbehavior, thus creating opportunities to assert their authority. After the quiz on the third day, Mike's students had 20 minutes to "make it look like you're doing something proper" but no particular assignment from him. When one group's conversation got a bit loud, Mike walked over and dramatically asked "Do you know how painful it is to have your lips stapled?" There was very little talking for the remainder of the class period. On the second day, after telling students to open their books to page six and take out their notebooks, Dave handed out blank paper to the first student in each row. When a few students started passing the paper back to the students behind them, Dave said abruptly, "I didn't tell you to pass those back." The students stopped, looking startled, and returned the paper. Then, Dave told the students to pass back the paper, and they complied. Subsequently, students in Dave's class asked several questions about what was or was not permissible behavior (e.g., sharpening pencils during seatwork). After this experience, they apparently were reluctant to risk acting on mistaken assumptions. No student questions about classroom rules were noted in the other classes.

The patterns of interaction that emerged in the six classes were clearly teacher dominated. Teachers initiated interactions with the expectation that students would respond. Usually, teachers addressed the class as a whole. Private teacher interactions with individual students were infrequent in most classes, and student-student interaction was discouraged.

During these first days of school, students seemed generally accepting of the teachers' rule announcements and follow-up tactics. Most students did not appear either surprised or resentful; from their facial expressions, some seemed a bit amused at times. Students accepted the teachers' claim to set the rules and wanted to know the groundrules. They were not consulted about the rules nor did they take any initiative in this regard. They waited for the teachers to tell them what to do (or not do), when, where, and how. Although students were not consulted, their compliance and acceptance of the teacher's authority "implicates them in the joint construction of the social world of the classroom" (West, 1975, p. 39). Teachers cannot establish authority without student consent; in effect, students have the power to grant or deny teacher authority.

In the classes we observed, students did not deny teacher authority. They did, however, engage in minor rule violations (e.g., talking without permission, not turning in homework on time) as if to test the limits of the teachers' tolerance, i.e., the circumstances where the announced rules were the teachers' actual, operating groundrules. Such testing can be seen as the students' attempt to clarify and understand the teachers' definition of the classroom situation for the purpose of compliance, negotiation of modifications, or effective challenge (Ball, 1980). While no direct challenges were observed, students were not entirely acquiescent and did take advantage of breaks such as transitions

between activities to move around and talk quietly with one another, and teachers were generally accepting of these student initiatives. Student defiance was rare and typically ended in a draw such as in the following exchange during the fourth week.

Harry: Next person I hear talking, we'll find something for
you to do, like copy the next spelling list 15 times.
(inaudible comment to individual student)

Student: I'm studying.

Harry: Study quietly then, to yourself.

For the most part, students appeared content to find some "wiggle room" and did not openly challenge teacher defined boundaries of appropriate behavior. Instances of student noncompliance provided temporary diversions that served to ameliorate but not to substantially alter their classroom situation. This negotiated accommodation seemed to satisfy both teachers and students.

In contrast to the explicit classroom social organizational ground-rules, substantive academic expectations remained largely implicit and somewhat vague. Teachers seemed concerned not to overwhelm students academically. Academic-social contrasts were most apparent in the seventh grade social studies class. While Dave was adamant that students behave as he directed, he encouraged students to ask questions about assignments and generally presented himself as their academic helper. On the third day of school, for example, after indicating the difficulty and importance

of the topic (the earth's rotations and revolution around the sun), he said, "If I lose you, say something. Don't let me go on," and he responded helpfully to student questions. He also was receptive to student questions that went beyond the assignments and to student disagreement regarding "the right answer." During a recitation-like review of a map quiz in the fourth week, one student objected when Dave said that her answer was wrong. She pointed out why she was correct, and Dave reacted with a smile, saying "Smart-aleck kid. You're right. You're right. . . . That's good you found that." Both teacher and student seemed pleased. Had students questioned his directions or procedures, his response would likely have been much less positive.

Along with the nondemanding nature of the academic tasks, the pace of activities in the science and social studies classes was slow, particularly during the first week. Seatwork-worksheet activities, for example, were often teacher directed in a step-by-step manner with comments such as "don't write in the answer until I tell you," "one part at a time," and "just hold up for a second." Ample time was provided for students to complete other in-class reading and writing assignments. Students who finished early were advised to "get a magazine or find something to do." The English classes, in contrast, moved at a brisker pace, perhaps because many of the activities involved review of previously studied subject matter (e.g., grammar, dictionary use).

Despite subject area differences, "basic" skills were emphasized in all the classes (e.g., vocabulary in science and social studies,

spelling and grammar in English). Study skills such as outlining and map and graph reading also had high priority. Curiously, skills were often addressed in isolation from subject matter. For example, during the second and third weeks, students in the seventh grade social studies class were reading and constructing bar, line, circle, and pictographs. One set of graphs showed the average income of black and white families in the United States, 1964-76, clearly illustrating the increasing gap between them. In a review activity, workbook questions about the graphs were asked and answered without any mention of the substance and meaning of the information presented. Also, while comprehension tasks were not uncommon in these classes, only one instance of student involvement in reasoning (problem-solving) tasks was observed. Here too, skills were separated from subject matter insofar as students were solving puzzles that were unrelated to the physical science they had been studying.

None of the teachers relied on or even followed a single textbook. Multiple curriculum materials, including teacher-made materials, were frequently used. While Ruth put an agenda of topics-activities on the chalkboard each day, the daily agendas in the other classes often were not known to students (or observers) until they were implemented. The curriculum-in-use in each classroom appeared to be shaped less by courses of study or textbooks than by institutionally sanctioned teacher beliefs and teacher-student interactions.

Grading procedures were usually described in detail. All six teachers used a point system in which each assignment was worth a certain number of points, and report card grades were determined on the basis of the total number of points students earned, not unlike a factory piecework system. In most classes, tests counted less than in-class and homework assignments.

Consistent with these grading procedures, teachers emphasized "doing the work" and "making an effort." Doing the work usually meant completing written assignments, such as worksheets and outlines, and turning them in on time. Paying attention and participating in class by answering teacher questions were also expected. The implication was that students would be held accountable and that everything counted. The substance and quality of work were rarely mentioned; more often, teachers told students not to worry if they had difficulty with a task. The emphasis on timeliness and effort seemed intended to reassure students that they all could get at least C or B grades. Gary told his students that none of them had to fail, that no one should get less than a B, and that grades depend on turning in assignments on time. Similarly, Wally told his students that he was there to make them successful, which would require work on their part, and that grades were their reward. By defining academic expectations primarily in terms of doing the work, the teachers seemed to be establishing standards that most students could meet, thereby increasing the likelihood that both they and their students

would be successful. While some students seemed restless at times, no direct student objections or counterproposals to the teachers' academic expectations were observed.

Academic expectations were established in much the same way as classroom social rules -- by means of teacher presentation, repetition, explanation, indication of the consequences of noncompliance, and follow-up in the form of reminders, encouragement, and exhortation to do the work. However, there was little humor here; work was to be taken seriously. What students were expected to learn was important, their teachers told them, for doing well on achievement tests and in high school and beyond. For example, after asking students what material objects they would "really like," and suggesting such things as a Rolls Royce, a house with a swimming pool, and a physician's license, Gary continued:

How do you achieve these dreams? The grades you make from this point on are extremely important. If you graduate from high school with an A average, your chances are better at achieving your goals. Grades are your payment for job performance. Thirteen years in school determine what you will do in 47 years in the labor force.

Students seemed generally accepting of their teachers' academic expectations. That most students did take their teachers, if not the work, seriously was indicated by their many questions about grading procedures and assignments (e.g., "Should we copy that [what was written

on the chalkboard] in our notebooks?") and their doing the work. Student questions about assignments can be seen as attempts to further define their situation, particularly to negotiate "task structures" to lower levels of ambiguity and risk so as to increase their likelihood of success (Doyle, 1979).

Congruence between academic expectations and social organization in these classes was quite evident. The social groundrules provided an environment conducive to doing the work. If students did not bring a pencil and notebook everyday, for example, they could not get their work done. With the exception of the seventh grade science class, which was more loosely organized, the classes became highly structured and teacher-directed. Teacher defined and enforced orderliness and work became the norm.

Classroom academic and social organizational groundrules were supported and encouraged by the school administration and documents such as the staff and student handbooks. In describing what they expected students to learn, the principals used the phrase, "academic responsibility," by which they meant following the rules and doing the work, the assumption being that as a result the school would run smoothly and students would learn what they needed to know. Apparent consensus regarding school goals and practices served to realize and maintain them. The modesty, neatness, and care of the school building and surrounding neighborhood appeared to be reflected in the curriculum being created in the classroom.

Curricular and Social Meanings

The emerging groundrules and routines seemed to have multiple purposes and effects. At the institutional level, they enabled the school to operate smoothly and students to learn what adults believed was important for them to know, i.e., what was needed to do well on achievement tests, in high school, and at adult jobs. Parents and school district administrators appeared to be satisfied, even pleased, with the school. We did not encounter any questioning of school goals or means of achieving them. The language and practice of academic responsibility and preparation for the future seemed congruent with community expectations.

By most standards, the teachers we observed were very effective classroom managers; most class time was spent with academic activities, and there were few student disruptions. The teachers' means of establishing the classroom social order appear comparable to those described in other studies (e.g., Emmer et al., 1980; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968). Emmer et al., for example, noted that

the more effective managers clearly established themselves as the classroom leaders. They worked on rules and procedures until the children learned them. The teaching of content was important for these teachers, but they stressed, initially, socialization into the classroom system. (1980, p. 225).

Assuming that the beginning of the school year establishes a backdrop for

what follows, how did it seem to extend, constrain, and shape the meanings of subsequent academic and social learning opportunities?

Effective classroom management seemed to provide an orderly social environment that was relatively predictable and comfortable for both teacher and students. Establishing routines, for example, reduced demands on the teachers' attention, enabling them to get down to business and attend to other matters such as students' difficulties and concerns. Once rules and routines were established, they tended to be maintained by participants' shared expectations and sense of mutual obligation. If relatively stable interaction patterns had not been established, then teacher-learning opportunities might have been limited by recurring management problems, and much less class time could have been spent with academic activities.

The teachers' emphasis on order and personal control, on students following rules and directions, resulted in clearly differentiated super- and subordinate teacher and student roles. Emerging activity patterns were highly structured by the teachers. An orderly flow of teacher-directed activities seems to have had several benefits: (a) there was ample and equal opportunity for students to learn something (e.g., since students were to be seated quietly with their materials on their desks when the bell rang, academic activity could and usually did begin immediately); (b) some degree of privacy and security within the classroom group was provided to individuals; and (c) student compliance allowed the teacher

to assist individual students while the others were "working."

At the same time, learning opportunities were constrained, and student initiative, while usually tolerated, generally was not encouraged. The priority given to an orderly flow of activities seemed to discourage divergent thinking and reasoning about academic matters and the expression of student ideas and beliefs except during creative writing. Much of the time was spent in modified recitation (teacher questions, student answers, and teacher elaborations) and individual seatwork, both intended to foster the acquisition, recall, and use of factual information. Also, the slow pacing of academic activities in most classes may have limited more able students by providing less opportunity in relation to their potential. Among the messages that might be communicated by these practices are that one's own thoughts and feelings are unimportant, that patience and passive compliance are rewarded while initiative and originality are not, and that learning (or work) occurs primarily in situations structured and directed by others.

Open-ended interactive activities would have been less predictable and more difficult to control, both behaviorally and intellectually. While such activities accommodate students' interests and experiences and enable consideration of alternative interpretations and courses of action, they also entail substantial ambiguity and risk for teachers and students. The priority ^{that} teachers gave to establishing and maintaining their authority in the classroom social order appears to have precluded such activities. Also

militating against such activities were the grading system and the prevailing definition of success in terms of making an effort and doing the work. It is ^{more} difficult to demonstrate effort and assign points to work accomplished in the absence of predetermined right answers

Except for tests, students seldom knew in advance what academic tasks or subject matter their teachers had planned for them, and specific academic expectations other than doing the work were seldom explicit. As a result, there seemed to be little sense of continuity or movement toward meaningful goals. The clear implication was that students should trust the teacher to know and do what was best for them and that they should follow wherever the teacher led. In these ways, the teachers seemed to be encouraging dependency. For the most part, the responsibility that students were expected to assume was limited to that delegated and defined by teachers. Also, to some extent, the teachers may have been fostering intellectual mediocrity. Students could succeed in school by making an effort and doing the work. Teachers did not seem to expect or want more than this. The intent seemed benevolent -- to reassure students and encourage them to try. Yet, the teachers also appeared to be communicating low expectations.

Meanings given to authority, work, and success further illustrate the possibly constraining effects of the curriculum created in these classrooms. Authority was claimed by the teachers largely on the basis of

personal expertise and assertion. It was implicitly and broadly defined as the right to decide, supervise, and evaluate classroom activity. Teacher demands, moderated by humor, justification, and expression of concern for students appeared to be accepted as reasonable by most students. Authority was a characteristic or right of some teachers (i.e., those who worked hard and earned it), which was inaccessible to students. Here, as in Dreeben's (1970) analysis of school experience and authority, students had ample opportunity to learn how to cope with and make the best of subordinate positions in authority relationships, but they had little opportunity to learn to assume authority and responsibility for themselves.

Regarding work, it was not uncommon for teachers to compare students to employees. "I'll treat you as if this were your job and I'm your employer," Mike told his students on the first day of school. Much of the work that students were to accomplish was mechanistic in form and substance -- more like that of factory or office personnel than of managers, professionals, or artists. Students were expected to do the work but not to participate in its planning or evaluation; they had little voice in deciding what they would do, how they would do it, or the basis on which it would be evaluated. Also, while schoolwork was to be taken seriously, it was not presented as enjoyable or satisfying in itself, but as a means to future, usually material, rewards. Generally, it was presented as instrumental to survival in a routinized and sometimes

hostile adult world. Norms of orderliness, timeliness, and effort also were justified in terms of preparation for adult work. It seems that the activities, interactions, and sentiments that constitute schoolwork and, by implication, foreshadow adult work, come to be taken-for-granted and accepted not only as the way things are but also as how they should be (see Popkewitz & Wehlage, 1977). Like the meaning given to authority, the teachers' interpretation of work appeared unnecessarily and undesirably narrow. Rather than expanding students' options, teachers seemed to be limiting them.

The operative definition of success at the middle school reflected the meanings given to authority and work. School success was defined primarily in terms of points earned for grades and promotion to the next grade level. School success, in turn, would lead to adult success on the job and material comfort. The prevailing message was that quality of school life and life after school depends on the quantity of things possessed (e.g., points, automobiles) and that survival and success defined in these terms are achieved by fitting in and making the best of one's situation, not by trying to change it. Although not necessarily contrary to students' present and future interests, the messages about authority, work, and success are clearly conservative of the status quo.

Being at the middle school from the beginning of the year and on consecutive days during the first week allowed us to gain some understanding of the curriculum that was being created. We learned something

about the social construction of curriculum-in-use, particularly about how the social organization of the classroom, including teacher and student roles, patterns of interaction, and norms seemed to shape what students had an opportunity to learn and how they were enabled to learn it. We did not, however, have access to students' interpretations of what was occurring other than what we inferred from their classroom behavior. Future studies might well more closely attend to both the meanings that participants, particularly students, give to school events and situations and to the encompassing social structural forces that impinge upon them. Studying curriculum as socially constructed curriculum-in-use may well contribute to a theory of curriculum that acknowledges its classroom location and multiple social contexts and that points to means of socially reconstructing curriculum so as to foster human opportunity and social justice.

Notes

1. We are most appreciative of the contributions of Susan Smith, who also assisted with document collection and data analysis, and of the cooperation of teachers and staff members who welcomed us into their school and made this study possible.
2. The activity-task coding system employed here is detailed in Korth and Cornbleth (1982).
3. All proper names are pseudonyms.
4. That the proportion of class time spent with comprehension and reasoning tasks during weeks two-four is nearly double that found in the previous year's study may be attributable to differences in the sample of teachers and classes as well as the time of year in which the studies were conducted.

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Table 1
Percent of Class Time Spend with Academic Activities
and with Comprehension or Reasoning Tasks
by Teacher*

	Day				Weeks
	1	2	3	4	2-4
					$\bar{X}$
English					
7th	78.13	81.40	100.00	88.64	89.44
	28.13	65.12	-	-	51.11
8th	26.67	97.73	95.45	93.18	89.52
	-	13.64	-	-	11.90
Science					
7th	-	54.54	95.35	82.22	86.70
	-	43.18	-	-	40.79
8th	-	35.55	50.00	61.36	97.44
	-	-	4.55	-	57.73
Social Studies					
7th	18.75	65.91	84.09	95.45	87.59
	-	-	-	-	44.45
8th	-	82.00	76.00	38.64	94.98
	-	40.00	-	-	44.11
Total ($\bar{X}$)					
	20.59	69.52	83.48	76.58	90.95
	4.69	26.99	.76	-	41.68

*Line 1 = academic activities; Line 2 = comprehension or reasoning tasks.

Table 2
Percent of Class Time Spent with Academic Activities
and with Comprehension or Reasoning Tasks
by Grade Level and Subject Area*

	Day				Weeks
	1	2	3	4	2-4
					X
7th Grade	32.29	67.28	93.15	88.77	87.91
	9.38	36.10	-	-	45.45
8th Grade	8.89	71.76	73.82	64.39	93.98
	-	17.88	1.52	-	37.91
English	52.40	89.57	97.73	90.91	89.48
	9.38	39.38	-	-	31.51
Science	-	45.05	72.68	71.79	92.07
	-	21.59	2.28	-	49.26
Social	9.38	73.96	80.05	67.05	91.27
Studies	-	20.00	-	-	44.28

* Line 1 = academic activities; Line 2 = comprehension or reasoning tasks.

Figure 1

Social Organizational Groundrules Presented by Teachers During the First Week of School

English

Science

Social Studies

Seventh Grade

1. Remain in hall if teacher is not in room.
2. Gum is not to be seen or heard.
3. Don't comb your hair.
4. Be kind to each other and the teacher.*

1. Sit down when you come into the room.
2. Be ready to work when the bell rings.
3. Have a pencil everyday.
4. Given a job, I expect you to finish.
5. Do not go behind teacher's desk.*
6. Gum chewing is OK if gum is not left on the floor or desk.

1. If you don't aggravate me, I won't aggravate you.*
2. When the bell rings, be in your seat, quiet, with book open. I start when the bell rings.
3. Get a notebook.

Eighth Grade

1. Be in your seat when the bell rings.
2. Sharpen pencils before the bell.
3. Do the homework when it is assigned, which is not often. (You cannot go back to your locker to get it if you forget to bring it to class; bringing it in on time is your responsibility.)
4. Bring pencil and notebook everyday.
5. I expect a degree of courtesy from you, and you can expect a degree of courtesy from me.

1. You will come to class fully prepared (pencil, books, homework).
2. You will always be on time . . . ready to start.
3. Don't touch anything when you come into the room.
4. Be ready to start class without being told.
5. "Tinkle Time" should not be necessary during class.

1. Have a notebook by Friday.
2. Don't interrupt whoever is speaking or cause disruptions during a presentation.*
3. I don't lend out pencils. You will need one everyday.

*Presented as most important rule.